

Week Ending Friday, December 28, 2001

Remarks at the 2002 Olympic Torch Relay Ceremony

December 22, 2001

The President. Please be seated. Good morning.

Audience members. Good morning.

The President. It's the kind of morning we expect when we're honoring the winter Olympics. This flame stands for the skill and dedication of friendly competition. I'm honored to take part in the 2002 Olympic torch relay, and I'm really proud to welcome the Olympic spirit to America this winter.

I want to thank Mitt Romney for coming. Mitt, it's great to see you again. I know Utah is well represented by the chairman, Congressman Jim Hansen. Thank you both for being here.

I want to welcome all the members of the Salt Lake Organizing Committee and members of the United States Olympic Committee for being here, as well. These men and women have worked tirelessly and long, long, long hours to make sure that our country is well represented when the world starts focusing on us yet again in February of this year. I'm really proud of the work you've done. You've brought a lot of honor to America, and for that, Americans are grateful.

The 2002 Olympic games will officially begin when this torch reaches its destination in Salt Lake City. Its 13,500-mile journey will bring it through 46 States, carried by some 11,500 torchbearers. Each torchbearer's story is a lesson in citizenship and courage and compassion.

Two torchrunners with us today were deeply affected by the attacks of September the 11th. Liz Howell lost her husband, Brady, in the attack on the Pentagon. Brady was fulfilling a lifelong dream by serving his country at the Pentagon. Liz left her native Utah to help Brady live that dream. Her participation in the torch relay represents the strength shown by so many families after September

the 11th. And Liz, our Nation prays with you during this holiday season. We pray for peace and comfort for you and your family.

Our other participant is a student, Eric Jones, who goes to George Washington University just a few blocks from the White House and the Pentagon. On September the 11th, Eric left the campus and headed to the Pentagon. He spent 4 days helping with the rescue efforts, and then he traveled to New York to do the same.

Before he left the Pentagon, Eric helped carry out a symbol of American pride, the Marine Corps flag. Last week that flag flew high above the Earth on the space shuttle *Endeavor*. On behalf of all Americans, I thank these two torchbearers for their courage and for their compassion, for representing the best of our great country.

I thank everyone who has worked so hard to make the Salt Lake City and the games a memorable site. I wish all our athletes God-speed. I continue to pray the Lord's blessings for safety and security on our great land during the holiday season.

Thank you all for coming. May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:27 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mitt Romney, president and chief executive officer, Salt Lake Organizing Committee for the 2002 winter Olympic games.

The President's Radio Address

December 22, 2001

Good morning. This week before Christmas was a busy one in Washington, DC. Members of Congress have returned home with many achievements to show for their work. Congress passed, and I will soon sign, the most important education reforms in a generation. We have taken strong action to support our military, protect our homeland, and make our airways more secure. The year